(b) what is the quantity of wheat already exported alongwith its price and the country to which it was exported;

(c) whether a proposal or sale of wheat to Democratic people's Republic of Korea has been received and whether a private company has been authorised to negotiate in this behalf;

(d) if so, what is the net selling price and whether a commission would be payable to the private company on realisation of export proceeds from the buyers; and

(e) what is the commission in US dollars PMT payable to the company and what are the reasons for paying commision if it is authorised only to negotiate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a) STC and MMTC have been permitted to export wheat at international price within a limited ceiling during 1987-88. The foreign exchange realised would facilitate import of edible oil.

(b) 5716 tonnes of wheat has been exported so far to Nepal and 15650 tonnes to DPR Korea during 1987-88 at contracted prices.

(c) A contract has been signed with M/s. Korea Cereals Export and Import Corporation for export of 1,00,000 tonnes of wheat for shipment during 1987-88.

(d) and (e) The price has been negotiated taking into account the prevaliing international prices and other factors including cost of servicing the order. The commission is for securing the business at an attractive price and for co-ordinating the smooth implementation of contract.

Suspension of two General Managers of NTC in Ahmedabad

1807. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that two been suspended in Ahmedabad following investigations by CBI;

(b) what were the charges against them and whether a fraud in the purchase and transportation of coal has been unearthed.

(c) whether another fraud in the payment of medical bills has also been detected in the textile mills run by Gujarat NTC;

(d) whether investigations are also going on regarding deposit of Rs. 75 lakhs in a private chemical company and whether the money has since been recovered; and

(e) whether in view of large scale frauds and mismanagement of the mills, Government propose to set up a high power Committee to revamp the entire NTC organisation in Gujarat?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MNISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI S KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Central Bureau of Investigation has registered a regular case for reported misuse of the official position in fraudulently increasing the frieght/contract rate of lignite transportation in respect of Mahalaxmi Textile Mills, Bhavnagar.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Central Bureau of Investigation has filed a charge-sheet in the connection in the Court of Special Judge, Ahmedabad on 20-9-1985. No amount involved in this base has been recovered so far.

(e) The Chairman-cum-Mg. Director of the Holding Company has been asked to ensure appropriate action against the guilty officers in these cases.

Closed Textile Mills in Gujarat

1808. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the [illegible] are unable to give

formal permission for closure of textile mills because the units are not able to provide terminal benefits to workers as per existing law;

(b) whether in view of this Gujarat Government has requested the Central Government for soft loans from the Rehabilitation Fund to the units which are closed at present; and

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction there to and whether other avenues like Advance Plan Assistance can be utilised for this purpose?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) The Government of Gujarat have stated that millwoners are reluctant to apply for formal closure under Section 25 (o) of the Industrial Disputes' Act, 1947 as this would involve immediate liability for payment of terminal benefits.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Union Government feel that it may not be possible to provide funds as soft loans out of the Textile Workers' Rehabilitation Fund Scheme for paying terminal benefits to the workers. The possibility of Advance Plan Assistance can be considered for this purpose, if a request to that effect is received.

Trade Deficit

1809. SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what was the trade deficit during the years 1985-86 and 1986-87; and

(b) what is the estimated trade deficit for the year 1987-88 and what concrete steps have been taken by the Central Government to narrow down the trade deficit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a) According to the provisional figures, India's trade deficit during 1986-87 was Rs. 751.51 crores as compared to the provisional trade deficit of Rs. 7950.91 crores during 1985-86. It may be mentioned that the trade deficit during 1985-86 as per the revised figures works out to Rs. 8754.00 crores.

(b) It is difficult to estimate precisely the trade deficit for 1987-88 at this stage. A series of initiatives have been taken by the Government to promote exports. These are designed to generate surpluses for exports to induce the production of goods contemporary in technology and competitive in prices and to make the exports profitable. Simultaneously the Government has also initiated a series of steps to promote efficient import substitution, particularly in the sphere of bulk import.

Opening of Regional Passport Offices in Andhra Pradesh

1810. SHRI TALARI MANOHAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to open Regional Passport Offices in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) No, Sir. There is no proposal under consideration to open additional Regional Passport Offices in Andhra Pradesh apart from the existing Regional Passport Office in Hyderabad.

(b) For the past few years, the Government has been following the principle of having one Passport Office in each State unless the number of passport applications from that State is too small which would not justify expenditure on opening a Passport Office in that State.